FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 19, 2002

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE/FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY EXPAND STUDY OPPORTUNITIES WITH NEW WEATHER FORECAST OFFICE

From its new location on the Florida State University (FSU) campus, the National Weather Service (NWS) forecast office in Tallahassee is expected to become a leading center for meteorological studies, while continuing to provide accurate and timely weather forecasts and warnings to the citizens of northern Florida, southwest Georgia and southeast Alabama.

The weather service's Weather Forecast Office (WFO) recently moved from the Tallahassee Regional Airport to FSU's James J. Love Building, home of the university's meteorology department. Recognized as the flagship meteorology department in the southeast, it is also considered to have one of the top five comprehensive meteorology programs in the nation.

"The ultimate goals of our collaboration are to help motivate and train a new generation of quality meteorologists, to discover ways to provide even better weather protection for the public and to foster research projects that will advance the science of weather and climate," said Donald J. Foss, Dean, FSU College of Arts and Science.

Of the National Weather Service's 121 WFOs, 14 are now collocated on university campuses. But among those 14, the Tallahassee office is one of only a few to actually share a facility with its host meteorology department. The Love Building also houses the FSU computer science and mathematics departments.

"Collocating our office with these outstanding university departments creates a wonderful synergy that will provide substantial benefits for the National Weather Service, Florida State University, the emergency management community and the public," said FSU alumnus Bill Proenza, director of the National Weather Service, Southern Region. "To that end, we are partners in improving weather services and saving lives."

"In addition to their primary responsibilities, our meteorologists are frequently engaged in a range of meteorological and hydrometeorological studies," said Paul Duval, meteorologist in charge of the Tallahassee WFO. "With the collocation, we now have the opportunity to exchange ideas and develop closer associations with students and professors involved in similar studies. In turn, faculty and students will be able to observe daily National Weather Service briefings and gain firsthand knowledge of the operational aspects of providing weather forecasts and warnings."

The close proximity of WFO Tallahassee and FSU's meteorology department will also enhance opportunities to expand existing collaborative projects – and create new ones. Collaborative efforts currently underway include a three year partners program to:

- Improve forecasting of tornadoes associated with tropical cyclones

- Enhance identification techniques for severe weather phenomena
- Develop a conceptual model for the prediction of Gulf Coast squall lines
- Improve marine weather prediction and rip current forecasting
- Provide better low temperature forecasting
- Study local sea breeze and related summer convection activity
- Improve fog prediction

Another partners' project includes collaboration between FSU, WFO Tallahassee and the NWS Southern Region Headquarters to determine precipitation frequencies for the new interactive forecast preparation system. FSU and the WFO offer internships to meteorology students, allowing them to work side by side with NWS professionals. They also sponsor a work-study program for graduate and undergraduate students.

"Now operational forecasters, faculty and students can easily work together on new methods of studying the atmosphere," said Robert Ellingson, chairman of the department. "Students and faculty will benefit from the expertise of the NWS personnel. Faculty and NWS personnel will have an opportunity to develop joint projects. Everyone will have an opportunity to easily exchange ideas at joint briefings and classes. This is truly an unprecedented activity at FSU."

To further facilitate collaborative activity, a portion of the Tallahassee office has been designated specifically for use by the FSU, Florida A&M University and state and county emergency managers.

While the Tallahassee WFO is active in collaborative efforts involving operational meteorology and education, its primary mission will not change. Its staff will continue to serve the residents of its tri-state, 49-county warning area with short-fused warnings (tornado, severe thunderstorm, flash flood), seven-day forecasts and climate reports, and specialized forecasts for the area's marine, aviation and fire weather communities. It also will continue to provide long-term watches and warnings, classroom education and a range of community outreach programs.

"The combination of technological advances and highly trained, experienced meteorologists has led to dramatic improvements in the accuracy of weather forecasting and warning lead times," Proenza said. "Collaborative efforts and partnerships between the National Weather Service and the academic community will continue to lead the way in the evolution of meteorology."

###

For more information, contact:

Ron Trumbla
NWS
817-978-1111 ext.140

Jeffery Seay
FSU
850-644-1489

http://www.srh.noaa.gov/tlh
http://www.met.fsu.edu/